GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:556
ANSWERED ON:30.08.2001
TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF WTO ON AGRICULTURE
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Task Force set up to study the impact of WTO regime on Indianagriculture has been disbanded by the Government, even before it could submit its second and final report;

(b) if so, at what stage the finalisation of the second report stands and the reasons for its disbandment;

(c) the main findings and recommendations made in the first report and the action taken, if any, thereon;

(d) whether the Task Force had sought extension of time; and

(e) if so, the reaction of the Government thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFFERED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.556 DUE FOR REPLY ON 30TH AUGUST, 2001.

(a) to (e): A High Level Task Force on Agriculture (TFA) was constituted on September12, 2000. The TFA was required to submit its report by February 28, 2001. On the request of the Chairman, TFA, the term of the Task Force was extended by four monthsi.e. upto June 30, 2001 with the direction that the Final Report should be submitted by the Task Force before the end of the extended term i.e. June 30, 2001. On the request of the Chairman, TFA, the term of the TFAwas once again extended by a month to enable it to submit its report by July 31, 2001. The twice extended term of the TFA expired on July,31, 2001. The Chairman, TFA has submitted his version of the Report dated 31st July, 2001.

The First Report of the Task Force was submitted in the first week of May, 2001.

The main conclusions of the First Report are summarized below:-

? Since our commitments of domestic support are well within allowable limits, there is ample scope for increasing domestic support for enhancing our comparative advantage. There is also urgent need to put in place an effective system of international trade monitoring and response.

? The National Agriculture Policy, which provides a policy framework forsustainable growth, must be operationalised to face the challenges of economic liberalization and globalization. Regional and sub-regional level programmes need to be charted out to attain this objective in a fixed time frame.

? Support through creation of infrastructure, watershed development, subsidized inputs and greater thrust on research, extension and risk management need to be continued. Alternatives to the minimum support price mechanism also need to be evolved.

? Competitiveness of Indian agriculture must be enhanced by tapping the potential of organic farming, developing value addition chain and post-harvest infrastructure in tune with global needs. Domestic market reforms and removal of restrictions on trade are also required.

? The issue of quality of produce and standardization as per international requirements should be given higher priority. Quality consciousness should be created in the agricultural sector.

? India`s negotiating proposals are based on concerns of food and livelihood security. These proposals, combined with matching efforts of production support in the domestic policy regime, will take Indian farming to higher levels of growth and prosperity.

The Department has already set in motion several measures for implementation ofthese recommendations. It is also recognized that some of the issues raised by the TFA would require extensive dialogue with State Governments and with other Departments/Ministries of the Government of India and would require long timeframes for their full implementation.